



Board of Barbering & Cosmetology

Manicure & Nail Salon Services Fact Sheet

August 2004

CONSUMER INFORMATION SHEET

How big is California's cosmetology industry?

- California's cosmetology industry has the largest professional licensee population in the United States. The Board of Barbering and Cosmetology licenses and regulates the barbering and cosmetology industry, including manicure services. Board inspectors conduct inspections (routine, random, and complaint-driven) for the safety and protection of both consumers and the practitioners.
- As of August 2004, there were more than 369,000 total licenses in California, which include more than 206,000 cosmetologists, 83,500 manicurists, and 35,000 establishments.

What is manicuring?

- Manicuring is the practice of cutting, trimming, polishing, bleaching, or cleansing the nails, or massaging, cleansing, treating, or beautifying the hands or feet of a salon client.
- California law requires individuals to be licensed as a manicurist or cosmetologist to perform manicures or pedicures.
- Any establishment employing manicurists and cosmetologists must also be licensed by the state.

Beauty services should never hurt or injure you, or put you at risk of infection.

You should report any side effects or unpleasant experiences associated with a service to your operator immediately.

Why do cosmetologists and manicurists need to be licensed?

- Cosmetologists and manicurists perform services that require them to actually "lay hands" on their clients. They use a variety of potentially hazardous substances in their practices — chemicals, sharp tools, and chemical procedures that alter hair, skin, or nails.
- The State of California requires them to be licensed to protect the health and safety of the public.

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Consumer Tips

- Before you accept any manicure or nail services, check out the salon first.
 - Make sure:
 - The establishment license is posted prominently in the reception area
 - Each operator's license is posted in plain view at his or her work station
 - The Board's Health and Safety poster is displayed in the reception area
 - There is adequate ventilation for release of fumes created by artificial nail products, nail polish, or other chemicals.
 - Use your senses
 - The salon must have clean working equipment and a clean work area. Licensees must wash and disinfect all tools and instruments before they can be used on customers.
 - Make sure the operator never uses the same tools on you that were just used on someone else without first disinfecting them. If an item cannot be disinfected (such as a nail buffer block or an emery board), it must be thrown away immediately after use.
 - Don't allow an operator to perform a service on you if they don't use a clean set of tools. The improper disinfecting of tools and equipment can spread disease and bacteria from one person to another. A prime example would be the spread of nail fungus during a manicure or pedicure.
 - You have every right to ask the operator to explain the disinfection procedures before a service begins. Various viruses can be transmitted through the use of dirty instruments, including HIV and Hepatitis B.
 - In addition to disinfecting tools and instruments, operators are required to wash their hands before their next client. Before an operator begins nail care services, they should also ask their clients to wash their hands.
 - Don't risk your health. If the disinfection procedure doesn't sound adequate, you should refuse the service.

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Health Tips

- Before receiving any nail care service, you should inform the licensee if you are diabetic, have a peripheral vascular disease (such as arteriosclerosis), or are taking any blood-thinning medication, including daily doses of aspirin. This will alert your manicurist or cosmetologist to take special precautions.
- Cracks or fissures in the nail could cause infection or gangrene, or even result in the amputation of a finger or toe.

– Warning Signs

- If the skin around the nail becomes painful, red, or inflamed, seek medical attention.
- If any part of the nail appears green or black, it could indicate an air bubble under the artificial nail where dirt or bacteria has accumulated. You should have the artificial nail removed if this occurs.
- Manicures and pedicures should never be painful.

Are Artificial Nails for You?

- Whether you will be happy with artificial nails depends on several factors, including your lifestyle and the type and length of nails you choose. In addition, you may discover that you have an allergic reaction to the chemicals in artificial nail products.
- Different types of artificial nails may be applied to natural nails to enhance their length and make them stronger. The most common are acrylic and fiberglass applications.
- Some people are hard on their nails and hands because of their jobs or lifestyles, and are not good candidates for artificial nails.
- Speak to your manicurist or cosmetologist.
- Discuss what your hands go through in a normal day, and ask for suggestions.
- You may decide that a plain manicure is the best service for you.

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– Nail Lifting, Fungus

- Sometimes an artificial nail begins to lift around the edges, allowing moisture to get trapped under it. Left untreated, mold or fungus (causing a green or brown discoloration) may begin to grow.
- If this occurs, your manicurist or cosmetologist should immediately remove the artificial nails and refer you to your doctor.
- Do not have the nails reapplied until your natural nails are completely healthy. Without proper treatment, these conditions could result in a permanent deformity of the nail. It should not be painful to have artificial nails removed. If the process causes you any pain or discomfort, tell your operator.

– Electric Nail Drills

- Electric nail drills are often used to file artificial nails. A licensed manicurist or cosmetologist may also use a drill on natural nails, but only if the drill is designed for use on natural nails and the operator follows the manufacturer's directions.
- The drill bits on these devices must be disinfected before use. Sandpaper-type drill bit coverings, if used, must be thrown away after use on each client.

Pedicure Concerns

- The Board's laws and regulations prohibit licensees and students from working on a person with an infection or communicable disease.
- It also prohibits them from massaging any person's skin if it is inflamed or infected, or where an eruption is present. Thus, if a client has athlete's foot, eczema, or other similar conditions, the manicurist must, by law, refuse the service in order to protect other customers.
- Your operator should never use illegal tools like Razor Callous Shavers (Credo Blades) and metal scrapers or graters. Used improperly, these devices can cause injuries that require medical attention.